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ABSTRACT

Small-group instruction is designed to develop group and individual interaction of all students. This learning module presents three groups of activities which should maximize small-group effectiveness. These activities are categorized according to functions best suited for small-group instruction, organization of the small group, and pointers for effective small-group instruction. A module pre- and post-test are presented in addition to self-tests for each activity grouping. (MJM)



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Small Group Instruction

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Prepared by Everett Hidlebaugh Junior High Principal Grinnell, Iowa

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August, 1971

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This fall our students are scheduled into large groups, small groups, laboratory classes and independent study time. Although many teachers feel that large group instruction is the more formidable, teachers who have taught in flexibly scheduled schools have found that small groups tap more teacher talent than any of the other instructional techniques.

Keekuk Junior High School's Evaluation Report of their 1968-69 school year states that: "Both teachers and students need to develop techniques and practices in this mode of instruction. From research and experience we are now convinced that this is the most effective method of instruction presently known; however, both to teach and to learn in small groups requires a change from the teaching and learning methodology to which we have long adhered."

The main purpose of small groups is to attain group and individual interaction of all students, which cannot be achieved in large or conventional group situations.

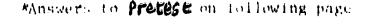
BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

After you have completed the instruction you will be able to:

- 1. List six functions best suited for small group instruction.
- 2. Name four elected or appointed positions with specialized roles in the organization of a small group.
- 3. List five pointers for effective small group instruction.
- 4. Name the most important thing a teacher should not do in small group instruction.

PRETEST "Small Group Instruction"*

1.	dame six functions best suited for small group instruction
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	6)





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Desc	ribe what a teacher should not do during small group instru
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	Answers to Pretest "Small Group Instruction"
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(2)	
, n. s.	from other instructional techniques.
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	and gain assistance.
	Group leadership may be developed.
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	- Auglustian myauidar faw futuwa mlammina
	evaluation provides for future planning.
(1)	Leader or Facilitator
(2)	Leader or Facilitator
(2) (3)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder
(2) (3) (4)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder Observer Consultant
(2) (3) (4)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder Observer Consultant Topics should be ones in which the students are interested
(4) (1)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder Observer Consultant Topics should be ones in which the students are interested and familiar.
(2) (3) (4) (1)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder Observer Consultant Topics should be ones in which the students are interested and familiar. The teacher should rarely serve as chairman.
(2) (3) (4) (1) (2) (3)	Leader or Facilitator Recorder Observer Consultant Topics should be ones in which the students are interested and familiar.



LESSON 1: FUNCTIONS BEST SUITED FOR SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

- 1. Small group discussions provide essential education for citizenship in a democracy. Pupils learn to discuss controversial matters, to communicate effectively, to listen to and respect the opinions of others, and to deal with people whose backgrounds and interests differ from their own.
- 2. Small group discussion uses and reinforces some of the knowledge pupils gain from large groups and in independent study.
- 3. Small group discussion helps students to crystallize ideas and attitudes formed in other learning activities.
- 4. Small group setting provides an opportunity for students to ask questions and seek assistance in work assigned in large group meetings.
- 5. The small group setting allows students equal opportunities for group leadership.
- 6. The small group discussion provides the teacher the opportunity to analyze the student's reactions to course content and to assess their knowledge of it. He can also observe the ability of each individual. From the small group, the teacher will obtain insights that should lead to improved large group presentations and to more effective independent study.

SELF-TEST - SMALL GROUP FUNCTIONS

The	major	function	ο£	small	groups	is	to:

(Provide for the opportunity for students to attain group and individual interaction.)

LESSON !: ORGANIZATION OF THE SMALL GROUP

Four people with specialized roles facilitate small group discussion. A "leader" helps to guide the discussion. A "recorder" keeps an account of what the group discusses. An "observer" constructively criticizes the discussion. A "consultant" provides information that the group needs.

The Leader or Facilitator

The group leader may be elected by the group or appointed by the teacher. The leader should maintain order by encouraging one person to speak at a time, involve as many persons as possible in the discus-



sion, allow minority opinions to be heard, and keep the discussion within the bounds of the topic and time available. An effective leader does not offer opinions or give answers, but encourages the group to develop their own thoughts. Some teachers find it beneficial in the beginning, to provide student leaders with a set of questions to help them to begin the discussion.

The Recorder

One member of the group is appointed "recorder." He keeps a record of the discussion and reports back to the group on request. Since the group is more interested in what is said rather than who said it, it is not necessary for the recorder to record names of persons making contributions.

The Observer

One student serves as a group "observer." The "observer" doesn't participate in the discussion so that he can concentrate on what is happening. Following a group discussion, he reports whether some persons are monopolizing the group time or if some are not contributing to the group. The "observer" helps to summarize the discussion and makes suggestions on the group's procedures and techniques.

The Consultant

The teacher, an invited expert, or sometimes a student, may serve as a "consultant" The "consultant" provides information and experience that other members may not have, but he should not make a speech or monopolize the discussion. Many teachers find this role difficult because they set too high a level for discussion or allow themselves to dominate the group because of the status of his position. (I'll try to keep this in mind at our faculty meetings this year.)

SELF-TEST - SMALL GROUP ORGANIZATION

A	small	grbup	may	have	four	people	with	specialized	roles.	They	are	
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3.						ullinda-ré	4		-		-	
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Quest: Read chapter 2) of Secondary School Curriculum Improvement by Trump & Miller. View the film Small Group Instruction by Dr. Dwight Allen. Read chapter 5 "Small Group Instruction" in An Educator's Cuide to the New Design by Manatt & Meeks. Read Glatthern's work on small group instruction. (Send to Allan A. Glatthern, Principal Abington High

(Answers: Leader, Recorder, Observer and Consultant)

School, North Campis, Abington, Pennsylvania 19001.) Read Small Croups: Some Sociological Perspectives by Clovis R. Shepheard.



LESSON III: POINTERS FOR EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- 1. There are at least two criteria which a small group discussion topic should meet: (1) the students must be familiar with the topic, and (2) it must be one about which the students are interested.
- 2. The teacher should rarely serve as the chairman of the group. The role of teacher should be that of consultant and advisor. In this role he helps to clarify issues and if necessary correct erroneous information.
- 3. In time, the teacher should find himself more of an observer and counselor. His job being to provide educational problems and learning experiences --not to be an active participant in the discussion. If after a few meetings, you find the discussion so lively that you find it difficult to refrain from participating, you have arrived.
- 4. Form the group in a circle. This provides each member with equal status in the group.
- 5. Involve all the students in the discussion. Every human being has a certain degree of self-centeredness. Boys and girls are usually more interested in their own achievements in the group than just listening to others.
- 6. Realize that it will take time for children to learn to discussi After; years of traditional classroom instruction, students tend to sit back and wait for the teacher to talk.

SELF-TEST - POINTERS FOR EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

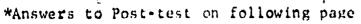
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Answer:	situation. to "shut up	Many teachers "long enough	l must learn no s and principal , or to step do	s find it d wn from the	ifficult: dominant



POST - TEST "Small Group Instruction"*

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1.	Func	tions best suited to small group instruction are:
	(1)	The students' learning to discuss topics and communicate with others.
	(2)	
	(3)	Students learn to crystallize ideas and attitudes.
	(4)	
	(5)	Group leadership may be developed.
	(6)	•
2.	Name	the four specialized small group positions described below.
		Maintains order, involves as many persons as possible in the discussion, allows minority opinions, and keeps discussion in-bounds.
	(2)	Reeps a record of the discussion and reports back to the group on request.
	(3)	Does not participate regularly in the discussion, but does constructively criticize the discussion.
	(4)	Provides information that the group needs.
3.	•	lete the five pointers for effective small group discussion ed below.
	(1)	Two criteria a small group discussion topic should meet are (a) and (b)
•	(2)	The role of the teacher should be one of and
		•



4.

1.

2.

- Students are familiar and interested in the topic. 3. (1)
 - (2) Consultant and advisor.
 - You will find it difficult to stay out of the discussion.
 - In the form of a circle. (4)
 - (5) Involve all students in the discussion.
- 4. Right! Talking too much. We need to "shut up" so that the (a) small group work will be effective.